

STAFF ANALYSIS

STAFF PERSON: Syd Shoaf, Senior Planner I
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS: June 21, 2023
PROJECT: SE202300016 2305 Hunters Way Special Exception
PARCEL ID: 07900-00-00-004P0

Special exception request to modify a Highway Commercial requirement in § 18-24.2.1(49) of the Albemarle County Code's Zoning Ordinance.

PROPOSAL

The applicant requests a special exception to exceed the 4,000 square foot maximum gross floor area limit for Storage/Warehousing/Distribution/Transportation uses. County Code § 18-24.2.1(49) allows up to 4,000 square feet of Storage/Warehousing/Distribution/Transportation uses per site within the Highway Commercial (HC) district. However, this requirement can be modified through a special exception approved by the Board of Supervisors. Currently, the site contains a two-story building with a footprint of 6,000 square feet, for a total of approximately 12,000 square feet of retail sales use. The applicant is proposing for this building to remain and to construct a new two-story building with a footprint of 21,800 square feet, for a total of approximately 43,600 square feet, for warehousing use. As stated in the applicant's request (Attachment A), the modification is based on the existing character of buildings in the Hunters Hall subdivision. Additionally, the applicant indicated that this development would not be seen from the entrance corridor (Route 250) and would also support Albemarle County's Economic Development goals. Further analysis is provided below.

CHARACTER OF THE AREA

The subject property is a 2.56-acre parcel zoned HC, in a 16-parcel subdivision designated Rural Area in the Comprehensive Plan. Currently, the subject property is developed with a two-story building with a footprint of 6,000 square feet, for a total gross floor area of 12,000 square feet (2305 Hunters Way) and 22 parking spaces. The property fronts on both Hunters Way and Route 250, with access from Hunters Way. Parcels zoned HC within the subdivision are primarily along Route 250 and consist of approximately 12 acres. The majority of the subdivision is zoned Light Industrial (LI), consisting of approximately 46 acres. Surrounding the property, uses vary from auto repair shop, daycare, retail, self-storage, manufacturing, distribution, and medical office/research. Adjacent to the property are a 45,000 square foot UPS Distribution Center, an 11,000 square foot storage warehouse, a two-story 40,000 square foot gross floor area building, and Prime Storage buildings that range from 4,000 square feet to 13,000 square feet.

ANALYSIS OF SPECIAL EXCEPTION REQUEST

Under County § 18-33.9(A), requests for special exceptions are reviewed under the criteria from the applicable section(s) of the Zoning Ordinance. County Code § 18-24.2.1(49) allows gross floor area to exceed 4,000 square feet for Storage/Warehousing/Distribution/Transportation uses in a HC district by special exception approved by the Board of Supervisors. Because § 18-24.2.1(49) does not specify factors to consider in granting a special exception, staff has considered the relevant factors found in County Code § 18-33.8(A), which applies to special use permits.

Staff offers the following analysis of the proposed modification against these factors:

County Code § 18-33.8(A) -*Character of the nearby area is unchanged. Whether the character of the adjacent parcels and the nearby area will be changed by the proposed special use.*

The proposed special exception would be consistent with the overall character of the Hunters Hall subdivision, which is zoned HC and LI. The parcels adjacent to the property are also zoned HC and contain buildings that are greater than 10,000 square feet in gross floor area. The proposed 43,600 square foot building would be consistent with the other warehouse and manufacturing buildings.

The property is along an entrance corridor (Route 250) and according to the initial site plan, the entrance corridor buffer would remain untouched. Additionally, the applicant's Attachment A states that the proposed building would be at an elevation of 377' and not be visible from the Route 250 corridor due to the steep berm adjacent to the roadway and the presence of the existing buildings. Therefore, approval of this request would allow the existing site characteristics to remain in place and would not affect the character of the surrounding area along the Entrance Corridor.

County Code § 18-33.8(A) -Harmony. Whether the proposed special use will be in harmony with the purpose and intent of this chapter, with the uses permitted by right in the district, with the applicable provisions of section 5, and with the public health, safety, and general welfare (including equity).

Hunters Hall is an industrial subdivision and it is expected that large structures such as the one proposed by the applicant will be developed there. The use is consistent with the goals and objectives of Project Enable. This special exception would be in harmony with the purpose and intent of the Zoning Ordinance, and would not negatively affect the public health, safety, and welfare as indicated above.

County Code § 18-33.8(A) -Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Whether the proposed special use will be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

The HC zoning of the property is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan, which directs development into the Development Areas. However, an employment-generating industrial business would occupy the structure. Therefore, this request is consistent with Strategies 2b and 4a from Chapter 6 (Economic Development) of the Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, the building would not be visible from the Route 250 Entrance Corridor, which is consistent with Strategy 8a from Chapter 5 (Historic, Cultural, and Scenic Resources) and would not adversely impact natural resources.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board adopt the attached Resolution (Attachment C) to approve the special exception, provided that the gross floor area of the Storage / Warehousing / Distribution / Transportation use on Parcel ID 07900-00-00-004P0 is limited to 43,600 square feet.